# Lean Thoughts

# LeadershiP

The following posting appeared in a Mile Stone Blog this week which really resonated with me …

**We've heard it so many times – employees don't leave bad companies, they leave bad managers. Leaders have an enormous influence on employee engagement and morale, but they also have a critical responsibility to make certain team members understand their jobs and how to be successful in their roles.** For many companies, training and onboarding is largely conducted by a professional training staff, so often managers feel they can take a back seat for encouraging and overseeing learning and skill development. In this edition of *Leadership Chronicles,* we offer a real-life example relating to this topic:

*"One of my first jobs out of college was in retail management for a major chain clothing store in Princeton, New Jersey. Merchandising and operations were dictated to us at the store level in great detail, and it was our job as managers to hold the staff accountable for meeting the strict standards. The job and the hours were brutal, but what I learned in my two years there has continued to serve me better than almost any professional experience I've had since.*

*"Our district manager was a no-nonsense man named Lon who had grown up and lived most of his life in Brooklyn, New York. While Lon didn't have much in the way of soft skills, he DID understand retail. Ultimately, his no-nonsense approach taught me a valuable leadership lesson.*

*"Most of the staff in our store were high school and college students whose concern for how denim was folded took a back seat to the rest of their lives. One day I groaned to Lon on his monthly visit to our store that I thought we were going to have to fire several people because they struggled to meet our standards. The conversation that followed went something like this:*

**Lon:** *"Have you trained them?"*

**Me:** *"Well, they all went through our orientation."*

**Lon:** *"But nothing since then?"*

**Me:** *"I guess not. We shouldn't have to show people more than once how to do something."*

***Long pause.***
**Lon:** *"If you don't think people are meeting the expectations you first have to make sure they know what the expectations are. It's your job to develop them to meet the expectations. If you don't like the way the staff is performing, then as the manager it is your fault."*

**Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality**

*"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."*

*manager, it's*

Ronald. E. Osborn

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**Lean Thoughts**

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*"He then went on to explain why it's more costly to hire new people than to develop current staff. Of course,* **he was right***.*

*"This lesson has come back to me in every role I've ever had. As a leader it's my job to train, develop, and work alongside my staff so they can meet the expectations of their roles, and beyond that, so they can grow into other roles outside of the organization or company. If I'm frustrated with someone, then the first questions to ask myself are, 'What is MY role in this person's performance? Where have I faltered in my leadership?'"*

-Angie Albright, Executive Director, Clinton House Museum

Research tells us that information gained from training on its own without direct application and reinforcement in reality is quickly lost. What team members learn in a classroom setting or through online training is a mere starting point. When leaders identify ways to take ownership in actively reinforcing training on the job, skills begin to really take hold.

Mariela and I see this way too often … people have been accepted into an organization and as the organization evolves the organization fails to provide the employee's additional training and education.   Eventually the organization decides that the employee is no longer an asset to the organization and decides to let them go … but really it is not the employee's fault but rather it is the fault of the organization..

A mature Lean Organization has several re-set methodologies like the annual review of their Enterprise Value Stream Map(s) which can trigger the need for additional training or enhancements to methodologies.

If you have not invested in training to advance your organization you are a step closer to extinction.

Years of training have showed us the following … Lead, Follow or Get out of the way …

Which is why in our coaching applications we strongly believe in the mantra of Learn, Apply, Audit since we know that every application of a methodology will conform to the cultural profile of the organization … so they seldom look identical.

Also remember that each Team Member will center into their own zone which is why you never want to interrupt them once they start working … which just robs your productivity.  I know many Leaders want to walk the floor and ask for updates from the employees but if you have 5 leaders doing the same thing it actually adds to 5 interruption times 22 minutes per interruption … or 110 minutes of less than at rate performance by the team.

This is why we strongly encourage the use of the Daily Report-Out methodology.

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